

# Governor's Natural Resources Leadership Summit

## *Summit Outcomes*



In the Fall of 2006, Governor Kaine convened a Natural Resources Leadership Summit. The conference included facilitated discussions about four topics: (i) air quality, (ii) outdoor recreation, fisheries and wildlife resources, (iii) water quality and water resources, and (iv), land conservation. The fourth topic, land conservation, had already been identified as a top goal of the Kaine administration, as the Governor had in April 2006 announced a goal of conserving 400,000 acres by 2010. Conference participants were urged to think creatively about how goals and strategies can benefit more than one of the four topics. Here are some of the ideas that sprang from the Summit:

### Air

- Build and connect bicycle and pedestrian trails; include in the VDOT six-year plan to incentivize the protection of “greenway” land.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMTs).
- Promote telecommuting through: (i) requiring state agencies to use electronic conferencing; (ii) utilizing tax credits; and (iii) broadband investments.
- Encourage all state agencies to have a transit incentive program.
- Reform building standards for state buildings and state-funded buildings to reflect LEED standards; set stricter energy efficiency standards for existing state buildings.
- Encourage energy efficiency and conservation through a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).
- Increase air quality monitors throughout the Commonwealth.

### Outdoor Recreation, Fisheries and Wildlife Resources

- Promote the development of a vital shellfish aquaculture industry in the Commonwealth's waters.

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- Integrate DGIF's Wildlife Action Plan and DCR's Virginia Outdoors Plan.
- Increase ecotourism marketing efforts at the state and local levels.
- Cultivate awareness of the natural world, a conservation ethic, and interest in recreational opportunities among Virginia's citizens.

### **Water Quality and Water Resources**

- Through the budget process, allocate significant funding to the Water Quality Improvement Fund, in addition to the required deposit of surplus revenues, to ensure that implementation of necessary priority agricultural practices and sewage treatment plant upgrades can proceed at a sufficient pace to meet the Commonwealth's 2010 commitments.
- Use the semi-annual updates to the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Waters Clean-up and Oversight Act to direct the funds to specific practices or locations as necessary.
- Prepare/Release a state plan to incentivize water conservation and promote water reuse to the greatest extent practicable. Set a goal for water reuse by the end of the Administration.
- Revise Agricultural Cost-Share Programs to maximize the geographic extent and time over which Best Management Practices are implemented. Potentially "package" priority practices with increased cost-share incentives to expedite implementation.

### **Land conservation: Governor Kaine's 400,000-acre goal**

- Provide adequate state funding to meet the goal through general funds, bonds or new sources of dedicated revenue.
- Target efforts to conserving large blocks of land, particularly forest land, in order to make the goal achievable. (Assistance should also be available to owners of smaller tracts who wish to conserve their lands.)

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- Compile and communicate information that identifies priority lands across the state. Identify state landholdings that may be appropriate for conservation.
- Partner with local governments by providing technical assistance and funding for local land conservation efforts, such as purchase of development rights programs.
- Make landowner outreach (i) frequent and consistent, (ii) accessible through the internet and through an individual contact in a state agency, (iii) easy to understand in terms of the steps required to conserve land.
- Ensure that land trusts, state agencies and professional advisors such as attorneys, realtors, public accountants, and appraisers have the capacity to assist willing landowners.